Customs duty on edible oilseeds

3875. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers of Kerala growing coconut and edible oilseeds are affected due to changes in custom duty on edible oils;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how the Government propose to compensate the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The Government of Kerala has informed that the changes made by the Government in the minor-policy on edible oils has affected the coconut farmers and therefore, requested to restore the tariff on import of palm oil to previous levels and permit export of coconut oil.

Accordingly, restrictions on exports of Coconut Oil have been lifted for exports through Cochin Port. The Government has also exempted from this export ban certain other oils produced from minor forest products with effect from 01.04.2008.

Ban on export of wheat

3876. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Union Government has extended the ban on export of wheat and other agriculture products for an indefinite period, in view of the acute shortage of foodgrains in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Export of wheat & wheat products has been banned with effect from 09.02.2007 until further orders. The export of non-basmati rice has been banned from 01.04.2008. Ban on export of pulses, effective from 22.06.2006 (except export of Kabuli Chana with effect from 07.03.2007), has been extended upto 31.03.2009. Export of edible oils, except coconut oil through Kochi Port, has been prohibited upto 31.03.2009.

Results of Foreign Trade Policy, 2004—09

3877. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Trade Policy, 2004—09 has produced the desired results in various sectors and promoted trade in those sectors;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some mid-term evaluation of the policy has been conducted by the union Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Foreign Trade Policy was announced in August, 2004 with the objective of doubling our percentage share of global merchandise trade within the next 5 years and to act as an effective instrument of economic growth by giving a thrust to employment generation. In 2003-04, India's exports stood at a little over US$ 63 billion. In 2007-08, they have exceeded US$ 155 billion. During the four years period, India's exports have grown around 2 $^{1/2}$ time, at a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23%, year on year, way ahead of the average growth rate of international trade. Further as per estimates, the incremental exports over the past four years have created around 135 lakh new jobs.

(c) and (d) The Government keeps monitoring the emerging situation and takes suitable measures, as necessary, from time to time.

Priority to supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers

3878. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request from the Indian Chamber of Commerce has been received in his Ministry directing the public sector mining companies to prioritise supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers at reasonable rate;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is thinking of putting a benchmark on ore prices in the long-term interest of the steel sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) is there any proposal to ban the export of iron ore without value addition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, has suggested that Government must issue directive to all Public Sector Mining Companies that they must accord priority of supply of iron ore (sized ore and fines) for domestic industry under long-term contracts wherein pricing can be linked to the cost of mining plus a reasonable ROI. Such prices may be subject to cost escalation annually.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(e) No, Sir.

Special package for tea plantation sector in Kerala

3879. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total special package amount for the development of tea plantation Sector in Kerala announced;